

# **Improve the quality of Washington's natural resources**

## **Tollgate #2**

- 1. Map of Causal Factors—See Separate Document**
- 2. Assess the performance progress in this result area-Update (New information since Tollgate #1 only)**

No new information since Tollgate #1. The results team continues to work on refining indicators and determine data availability.

- 3. Propose high-level purchase strategies for this result area. What are the key areas where the state should take action, and how (if known at this point)?**

Although the team has not changed its major strategies since Tollgate #1 it has changed the name of three strategies to better reflect the activities within it. “Manage the Damage” is now “Safeguards and Standards;” “Harvest the Value” is now Sustainable Use of Public Resources; and “Change Individual Behavior” is now “Change Individual Practices and Choices.”

Below are outlined the five major strategies and their high-level purchase strategies. This is not intended to be inclusive of all activities but is intended to describe the major areas of activities or high-level strategies currently used to manage the state's natural resources.

**Safeguards and Standards:** This strategy establishes standards to prevent harm to the state's natural resources caused by human actions. Although traditional regulatory approaches are the primary tool of the strategy, other tools such as technical and financial assistance, also play a role. High-level purchase strategies include:

- Regulating emissions and discharges to air, land and water from point (industrial, and municipal sources) and nonpoint (agriculture, septic systems, vehicles, stormwater) as well as managing solid and hazardous waste.
- Technical assistance programs to industry and agriculture to implement practices to reduce emissions or discharges
- Controlling land-use through the Growth Management and Shoreline Management Act and regulation of harbor lines.
- Protection of fish and riparian habitat and water quality through the Hydraulic Permit Applications (HPAs) and Forest Practice regulation.
- Prevent and respond to spills of oil and hazardous substances.

**Preserve, Maintain and Restore Natural Systems and Landscapes:** This strategy attempts to maintain and restore the state's natural systems and the ecosystem services they provide to society. High-level purchase strategies include:

- Land acquisition and leasing
- Riparian and fish passage restoration through grants and technical assistance and implementation of forest road maintenance and abandonment plans on state lands.
- Restoring water quality and quantity through completion of watershed plans, and water quality plans (TMDLs); establishment of instream flows; and providing implementation funding for infrastructure, and water conservation.
- Clean-up of toxic and hazardous substances on uplands and aquatic lands
- Improve diversity of habitats on state timber lands through thinning and harvest.
- Restore wild fish populations through hatchery supplementation.
- Develop recovery and protection plans for wildlife species.

**Sustainable Use of Public Resources:** The goal of this strategy is to realize economic and social benefits from the sustainable use of public natural resources. Activities on state trust lands often provide non-tax revenue for school construction and the state's universities. High-level purchase strategies include:

- Managing state trust-lands to provide sustainable sale of valuable materials and services from state trust and aquatic lands as well as dispersed public access.
- Water Right administration to provide water for agriculture and economic development.
- Operate state fish hatcheries to provide fish for commercial and recreational harvest and to meet tribal treaty obligations while minimizing their impacts on endangered stocks.
- Managing fish and wildlife populations for harvest and to provide fish and wildlife viewing opportunities.

**Change Individual Practices and Choices:** This strategy attempts to influence the knowledge and understanding of the public's impacts on the state's natural resources. High-level purchase strategies include:

- The state Commute Trip Reduction program which promotes alternatives to single occupancy vehicles.
- Education programs which promotes the proper use of pesticides and fertilizers and attempts to reduce their use.
- Providing information on occurrences and the public health impacts of air and water pollution.

**Data and Monitoring:** Good natural resource management is dependent upon good science and monitoring data. It influences decisions made in all other major strategies. Good data can help identify problem areas, and target the most effective responses. Monitoring can also tell us whether the strategies we have selected are being effective. High-level purchase strategies include:

- The Department of Ecology's Ambient Water Quality and Quantity Monitoring Program
- The Puget Sound Ambient Monitoring Program
- Quality Assurance and Laboratory Certification
- Fish and Wildlife Population Monitoring and Modeling
- Air Quality Monitoring
- Forest and Fish Monitoring and Adaptive Management

#### **4. Provide guidance to agencies for budgets, analysis and legislation**

##### **A Identify operational or legal barriers to the implementation of the high-level strategies.**

- **Governance** –Management of natural resource activities is dispersed among multiple agencies, commissions and separately elected officials, levels of government (state, local, federal). This results in several concerns.
  - **Conflicting mandates** and dispersed authority among agencies can makes it more difficult to manage effectively. Specific areas include invasive species and lands, habitat management and protection.
  - **Potential overlap of administrative functions** – Ex. Budget, accounting, information systems, real estate etc.
  - **Potential overlap of similar activities** – Ex. Monitoring, Regulation
- **Restricted Use of Dedicated Funds** – Dedicated funds have helped shift expenditures from the state General Fund to other activities. However, restrictions on funds prevent using them for higher priority activities.
- **Legal Barriers**
  - **Septic systems:** The state lacks clear authority to require septic system maintenance without proving before hand that damage is occurring.
  - **Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** It is unclear under the Federal Clean Air Act whether the state can adopt California Air Emission standards for new vehicles. Adoption of this standard would help significantly reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.
  - **Water Law:** Despite improvements made in the last few years there still are major problems with the state's water law use it or lose it doctrine that provides little incentive for water conservation.

##### **B Identify opportunities to reduce the price or improve the efficiency of current services.**

- **Coordinate and align natural resource grant programs to better achieve results** - Ex. (Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Salmon Recovery Funding Board, Ecology and Conservation Commission grants nonpoint grants etc.

- **Better coordinate monitoring data collection, systems and public access** – Ex. Expand monitoring data collection across agencies to achieve greater coverage (Water Quality, others?)
- **Seek efficiencies to improve project effectiveness monitoring.** - Under HB 1789 (Chapter 227, Laws of 2001) each agency is charged with incorporating out-come base performance measures into their grant and loan programs. Most agencies have required project applicants to develop project monitoring programs to show that their projects were successful. A more systematic approach might receive the same results at lower costs.
- **Move to electronic invoicing for state natural resource grant programs** - Grant recipients must submit invoices to receive reimbursement from state agencies. Replacing the current paper invoice system used by most agencies with an electronic system would reduce staff costs.
- **Administration of land management and acquisition programs** – Several state natural resource agencies acquire or manage land. There maybe efficiencies or process improvements possible around:
  - **Real Estate Transactions-** Ex. Appraisals, purchasing etc.
  - **Land management Activities**– Ex. Expanding working circle agreements to reduce travel time; developing work crews for specific activities such as weed control or fencing.
  - **Cultural Resources** – Identifying and protecting tribal cultural resources is an issue that cuts across agencies and often results in significant costs. Identifying ways to streamline this process would be beneficial.
- **Work on Contracting In with state agencies** – Consolidating operations across agencies or within a geographic location can often reduce costs and improve service. Examples, motor pool and heavy equipment, printing, shops, others.
- **Improve permitting process** – The goal is to streamline the process for the applicant and the agencies while achieving the same level of environmental protection.

**C Identify new initiatives and areas of budget focus that should be pursued based on Tollgate #1 and #2 analysis.**

The team identified the following areas of budget focus by major strategy as important to achieving results in the next biennium. The team did not have sufficient time to prioritize or to pick specific actions or new initiatives that should be pursued in each area. For example, with conserving habitat and resource lands the team felt in important to be more specific about the types of lands to conserve (forest, shrub-

steppe, forest) and through what mechanisms (Shoreline regulations, acquisition, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program). The team plans to meet in early June to develop more specific directions that could be used by agencies in developing budget proposals. Below are the major areas of new initiatives and budget focus that the team has identified.

### **Safeguards and Standards**

- Reduce impacts from stormwater
- Reduce impacts from septic systems
- Reduce and eliminate toxics, including diesel emissions, entering state waters uplands, aquatic lands and air
- Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Improve capacity to review projects and activities.

### **Preserve, Maintain, & Restore Natural Systems and Landscapes**

- Establish and Update Instream Flow Rules
- Enact programs to achieve adequate water in streams to achieve Instream Flows and mitigate for climate change
- Conserve Habitat and Resource Lands, examples Shoreline, Nearshore and Critical Areas
- Restore “Unhealthy ecosystems” on state and private lands
- Clean-Up Toxic Sites on Upland and Aquatic Lands
- Implement Regional Salmon Recovery Plans

### **Sustainable Use of Public Resources**

- Reform hatcheries and harvest management to protect listed and native species
- Improve the ability to manage state lands to meet multiple objectives of state trust revenues, ecosystem services, local economic activity and dispersed public access.

### **Data and Monitoring**

- Improve state and local governments ability to monitor to achieve priority objectives.
- Improve ability to provide understandable and accessible information to the public.

### **Change Individual Practices and Choices**

- Improve understanding of the benefits (ecosystem services) provided by habitat, air, water and fish and wildlife species.

- Continue to promote understanding of individual impacts and choices upon the environment.

**D Identify specific research projects and budget proposals that may aid the team's development of the detailed purchase plan in the fall.**

Below is a preliminary list of potential research projects and budget proposals recommended by the results team. Because the team has yet to prioritize and narrow the list of specific actions or new initiatives that should be pursued around each major strategy this recommendation may change. Specific proposals include:

- Continue to develop strategies and approaches to reduce greenhouse gases.
- Explore options for reducing water quality impacts from septic systems, particularly around Hood Canal.
- Improve the ability of agencies to address cultural resources.
- Explore options to coordinate the implementation of Watershed Plans and Regional Salmon Recovery Plans. The number of completed watershed plans is increasing and regional salmon recovery plans will be finished by the end of the biennium. Developing mechanisms to implement these plans is the next step. This may include working with agencies to embrace these efforts and use them in guiding their budget resources and management decisions. The Department of Fish and Wildlife is also exploring the use of mitigation funds as a way of funding implementation of these plans.
- Explore ways of incorporating the real costs of an activity into decision-making. For example, the real costs of pollution are generally not captured under the current business model and regulatory system. Making use of the economic system through emission and/or use fees on toxics or hazardous materials can reduce the use, emission and disposal of toxics material without increasing regulation. Such an approach has the potential to reduce the regulatory burden on business and reduce costs to state agencies. Revenues from these fees can be used to provide technical assistance to business to help them achieve emission reductions.
- Review opportunities for using nontraditional approaches to regulation i.e. "Winning Compliance". Although agencies have made progress in the last few years in improving regulatory programs, more can be accomplished. Additional work can be done in setting permit processing standards, educating compliers about what is expected, reporting compliance information and providing incentives to comply with current standards.